

Jack Kelly part 2
Interviewed by Nancy Solomon
September 11, 1997

Side A

Independent baymen could not harvest oysters within leased land. Some went on outskirts. Picked up at low tide. Oysters like brackish water. In shallow and deep water. After Riverhead treatment plant opened they disappeared. Happened when wetlands were filled and houses built.

Science study says scallops were killed by eel grass. Jack says eel grass was disappearing before brown tide – was a catalyst. Brown tide is a symptom of a bay in distress. Chlorine's role needs to be researched.

Clams are not as sensitive as scallops and oysters. Got thinner. Not a major soft clam region. More in west bay. Hallocks Bay – major area. Summer income among college students – harvest 5 -6 bushels/day in Cory's Creek. Raking. Boat traffic has increased. Plum Gut for fishing. Used to go to Jessups – now bait fish are at Plum Gut. Decline in fin fishing over 25 years. "It's nothing like it used to be."

Near south ferry – no more scallops now. "Everything has diminished." Crowe Industries – discharged toxics into the bay –Sag Harbor. No oil spills. Greenport – natural gas tanks earlier (now gone). Unloading area for small oil tankers in pipeline to shore, west of ferry terminal. Oyster factories west of Greenport today are condos today.

Side B

No industrial accidents. No generating plants. Mostly part time baymen. Hundreds in the 1950s and 1960s. Trawlers – 2 or 3 men worked on them. Brown tide – part timers suffered too.

Moss bunker boats – African Americans manned the boats. Mossbunker is a bait fish that was pressed for oil and fertilizer. Were in Little Peconic Bay. Offshore too. Banged oars on water to attract fish. Used 10-foot deep net. Sang while working. Came from Virginia. No local folks worked on the boats. Summer season. Gone after mid 1960s. Also known as menhaden, porkies. Attracted sharks.

End.